

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0542

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV PBOR MILI ETRD EPAP CU ET SO UR
SUBJ: GRANMA CALLS FOR MAXIMUM SUGAR EFFORT

REF: HAVANA 523

1. MAJOR AUTHORITATIVE GRANMA EDITORIAL, FEBRUARY 28, PRESUMABLY ISSUED AS RESULT OF POLITBURO SUGAR HARVEST REVIEW, FEBRUARY 24 (REFTEL)N CALLS FOR MAXIMUM EFFORT FOR NEXT HUNDRED DAYS IN MAKING UP SERIOUS RAIN-IMPOSED LAGS IN 1978 SUGAR HARVEST. DIRECT IMPACT THAT THIS MAJOR EFFORT WILL HAVE ON ADDITIONAL ETHIOPIA-RELATED MOBILIZATION POSSIBILITIES IS EVIDENT IN EDITORIAL'S STATEMENT THAT IT IS NECESSARY "IMMEDIATELY" TO BRING UP TO FULL FORCE THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN HAND CANE-CUTTING - A NUMBER WHICH EDITORIALS IS NOW NATIONALLY EIGHT THOUSAND PEOPLE BELOW PLANNED LEVEL. IN ADDITION, EDITORIAL POINTS OUT THAT ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF HAND-CUTTERS WILL BE REQUIRED IN AREAS WHERE WEATHER CONDITIONS INTERFERE WITH MECHANIZED HARVESTING. FURTHERMORE, MAJOR EFFORTS MUST BE MADE

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TO OVERCOME LAGS IN PREPARATORY WORK FOR 1979 AND 1980 HARVESTS, EDITORIAL SAYS. GRANMA POINTS OUT, PRESUMABLY BOTH AS STIMULUS AND RECOGNITION OF DIFFICULTIES, THAT PROBLEM MUST BE HANDLED AT TIME WHEN OTHER "THOUSANDS" OF CUBANS ARE "CARRYING OUT WITH HONOR AND ABNEGATION THEIR SACRED INTERNATIONALIST DUTIES FAR FROM OUR LAND".

2. EDITORIAL POINTS OUT THAT "IMPORTANT INCREASE" IN PRODUCTION IS PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR - AN INCREASE WHICH EDITORIAL CLAIMS IS ALREADY COMMITTED TO BUYERS. EDITORIAL CONTINUES THAT " IT IS NOT ONLY THE MOST VITAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS, BUT ALSO (CONSIDERATIONS OF) THE PRESTIGE AND SERIOUSNESS OF CUBA WHICH IMPOSES ON US THE DUTY OF GUARANTEEING THESE DELIVERIES TO THE USSR, OTHER FRIENDLY AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, AND TO ALL MARKETS OF OUR SUGAR." (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH CUBA WILL BE LIMITED BY ISA QUOTA REDUCTION MECHANISM TO FIRST YEAR EXPORT ALLOCATION OF ABOUT 2 MILLION TONS - AND WILL PROBABLY HAVE TROUBLE SELLING THIS AMOUNT, USSR PURCHASEES UNDER FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT RISE TO MINIMUM 2.7 MILLION TONS THIS YEAR- EXCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL HARD CURRENCY PURCHASES WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED. WE HAVE RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT COMECON EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE BOOSTED THEIR PLANNED PURCHASES TO 620 THOUSAND TONS THIS YEAR. THESE FIGURES, COMBINED WITH REPORTED INCREASES IN CHINESE PURCHASES, MAY BE CAUSING CONCERN OVER ABILITY TO MEET COMMITMENTS. WE, INCIDENTALLY, CALCULATE TOTAL LIKELY CUBAN SALES AS NO MORE THAN 6.2 MILLION TONS. CUBAN ANXIETY OVER SATISFYING COMMITMENTS MAY, THEREFORE, INDICATE THAT HARVEST MAY FALL UNDER LAST YEAR'S POSSIBLY FALSELY REPORTED 6.345 MILLION TONS.)

3. COMMENT: WHILE HUNDRED-DAY CAMPAIGN TO COMPLETE SUGAR
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HARVEST WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PLACE FURTHER SQUEEZE ON POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE MILITARY MANPOWER POOL, ONE CAUTIONARY NOTE IS APPROPRIATE. EDITORIAL STATES THAT HARVEST PROBLEMS ARE PARTICULARLY SERVE IN SIX PROVINCES (LAS TUNAS, VILLA CLARA, HOLGUIN, CAMAGUEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, AND GRANMA) WHERE PRODUCTION IS FALLING BELOW 80 PERCENT OF CAPACITY. THIS MAY INDICATE THAT ONLY IN THESE PROVINCES WILL MASSIVE LABOR MOBILIZATIONS BE REQUIRED TO SPUR PRODUCTION. ALSO, EDITORIAL SPEAKS OF NEED TO "CONVINCE" EXPERIENCED CANE-CUTTERS AND PEASANTS NOW PARTICIPATING IN HARVEST TO WORK DOUBLE SHIFTS AND TO GIVE UP REST AND FOR ALL HARVEST PERSONNEL TO REMEDY CURRENT PRODUCTION DROPS ON WEEKEND. THUS, EFFORT MAY CENTERED ON SQUEEZING MORE PRODUCTION OUT OF CURRENTLY DEPLOYED LABOR FORCE.

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